

Application No. 10/763,098
Amendment "B" dated March 14, 2006
Reply to Office Action mailed February 22, 2006

REMARKS

The Office Action, mailed February 22, 2006 considered claims 1-24. Claims 15 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Deering et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,417,861). Claims 16-20 and 22-24 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 1-14 were allowed.¹

Applicants note that the IDS filed on January 24, 2005, referencing U.S. Patent No. 5,339,092 has not been signed off and returned by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner acknowledge receipt and consideration of the IDS filed on January 24th by returning a signed off copy of the listed reference.

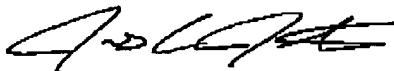
By this paper, claims 19 and 22 have been cancelled, claims 15 and 21 have been amended and new claim 25 has been added, such that claims 1-18, 20-21 and 23-25 remain pending.

Allowable/objected to dependent claims 19 and 22 have been cancelled and rewritten into independent claim format as amended claims 15 and 21, respectively. Allowable/objected to dependent claim 16 has also been rewritten into independent claim format as new claim 25. By rewriting the allowable/objected to dependent claims into independent claim format, all of the rejections of record are now moot, such that all of the claims should now be found in condition for immediate allowance.

In the event that the Examiner finds remaining impediment to a prompt allowance of this application that may be clarified through a telephone interview, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney.

Dated this 14 day of March, 2006.

Respectfully submitted,



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¹ Although the prior art status and some of the assertions made with regard to the cited art is not being challenged at this time, inasmuch as it is not necessary following the amendments and remarks made herein, which distinguish the claims from the art of record, Applicants reserve the right to challenge the prior art status and assertions made with regard to the cited art, as well as any official notice, which was taken in the last office action, at any appropriate time in the future, should the need arise, such as, for example in a subsequent amendment or during prosecution of a related application. Accordingly, Applicants' decision not to respond to any particular assertions or rejections in this paper should not be construed as Applicant acquiescing to said assertions or rejections.